

(Revelation) Revelation 11:16-12:17

by Zac Poonen

The sermon explores the themes of the kingdom of God, the 1,000 year reign of Christ, and the judgment of the dead, highlighting the importance of living a life of faith and obedience.

Duration: 1:01:09

Scripture: Genesis 37:9, Malachi 3:16-17, Luke 14:12-14, Revelation 11:18

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of avoiding pride and rebellion, as these traits make people like Satan. He highlights that Satan infects people with pride and rebellion to make them like himself. The preacher also mentions that Jesus has already overcome Satan, and as believers, we have the privilege of executing that victory. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the need for repentance, overcoming, and being ready to be the bride of Christ, as this will bring joy in heaven.

Transcript

We'll turn to the Word of God, and turn today to Revelation chapter 11, to the closing part of that. In our last study, we considered verse 15, where the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying, the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever. We considered how, at the last trumpet, Jesus establishes his kingdom.

That looks forward to the beginning of the 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth. And in verse 16 to 18, we have another picture of worship and praise. The 24 elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God.

We find them again and again leading the hosts of heaven in worship, saying, verse 17, we give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast, because thou hast taken thy great power and hast begun to reign. We find in the book of Revelation there is frequent mention of the Almighty power of God, and that's one of the things they praise God for in heaven. They praise God for the fact that he is sovereign and he rules over the whole universe, rules over everything.

He's in complete control, and this is why heaven is a place of such peace. And this is how it can be in our life too, when we recognize that the Almighty God is ruling. And then in continuation of their praise and worship, they say in verse 18, the nations were enraged and thy wrath came.

All the nations of the world have turned in rebellion against God, and God has been long suffering with them for many thousands of years, but finally his wrath has come. In other words, there's a time limit to God's patience and to the time that he gives to people to repent. A time comes when this word will be fulfilled, thy wrath has come.

It hasn't come yet, we are in the day of grace now, but one of these days this word will be fulfilled, thy wrath came. And the time came for the dead to be judged. That also is going to come.

We read in John chapter 5 and verse 29, John 5, 29, verse 28 and 29, Jesus said, don't marvel at this, for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear his voice, that is the voice of the Son of Man. Everyone, believer, unbeliever, etc., and shall come forth. Those who did the good to a resurrection of life, and those who committed the evil to a resurrection of judgment.

There are two resurrections. There's not going to be just one general resurrection of the dead. Jesus said here, there is a resurrection of life and a resurrection of judgment, and as we study later on in the book of Revelation, we'll discover these resurrections are separated by about a thousand years.

But it's all brought together here in Revelation 11, 18. The time has come for the dead to be judged, and the time has also come to give their reward to thy bondservants, the prophets, and to the saints, and those who fear thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth. Notice the categories of people mentioned here.

Bondservants, that is a phrase that is found mostly in the New Testament. The apostles called themselves bondservants of Jesus Christ. They were the leaders in the New Testament age, and then the prophets.

The prophets were essentially the leaders in the Old Testament age, and then it says to the saints. Saints is a New Testament word. It refers to all those who have come to faith in Christ and become his disciples, and those who fear thy name is an Old Testament phrase.

So here we find the Old Testament leaders, and the New Testament leaders, and the Old Testament believers, and the New Testament believers, all brought together, and it says here the time has come to give reward to these who have been faithful in their earthly life. I want you to turn in this connection to one verse in Malachi chapter 3, the last book of the Old Testament. Malachi chapter 3, this phrase rewards to those who feared thy name.

We find a little amplification of it in Malachi 3 verse 16. Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for those who fear the Lord and who esteem his name. And they will be mine, says the Lord of hosts, on the day that I prepare my own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.

So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve him. Now today it's very difficult to distinguish between the one who is really serving God and the one who is not really serving him. It's very difficult, I would say almost impossible, because we can only look at the external appearance and we do not know with what motive a person serves God.

We don't know whether a man is seeking the glory of God or seeking his own honor. We don't know whether mixed up in all is serving God is a desire for some honor or some money or something or the

other. But the Lord says, that's all right, you're in your earthly lifetime, you won't know.

But a day is coming when God will turn the focus of his heavenly searchlight on everybody's heart, and then the time comes to reward those who fear his name, the saints, and to reward the prophets and the bond servants of Christ in that day, when the hidden motives and everything is exposed. It says in that day, you will see very clearly who really served God and who served only themselves. And in that day the word of Jesus will be fulfilled.

Many who are first will be last. Many whom we considered to be such wonderful servants of God, when God exposes their inner life and their motives, you will discover they were pretty corrupt inside. Many believers whom we had such a high opinion of, when God begins to reward them, we will discover their loss in the line.

And some others whom we didn't think very much of will be pretty high in that day, because of the sincerity and uprightness of their heart before God. So God's got a book of remembrance, and there he carefully watches everyone to see who fears his name, who fears him, who fears him in their conversation. It says they spoke to one another.

I believe there are very few names in that book of remembrance, very few. Because my own experience has been that there are very few among believers who have any fear of God in their private conversation and in their private speech. Very few, I would say less than 1% of born-again believers that I have met, have any sense of a fear of God in their private conversation.

So there are very few in that book. I don't believe it's a very fat book, it's a very thin one. There are very few, but those are the ones whom the Lord calls his special jewels.

So it says in Revelation 11 18, that time has come. Jesus said in Luke chapter 14, Luke's gospel chapter 14 verse 14, he said this in verse 12. He said, When you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite your friends or your brothers or rich neighbors, lest they invite you in return and repayment come to you.

Here is a command of Jesus, which again less than 1% of believers even bother to pay heed to, leave alone obey. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. The point is not that we have to go around looking for the lame and the blind people.

The point is, we are to look for those who cannot return the gift we give them. And you will be blessed, verse 14, not because they are poor and lame and blind. No, that's not the reason, because they do not have the means to repay you.

Blessed are you, if you have learned that, to do your good to those who have no means to repay you. When are you going to get repaid then? You will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. That is the time when God is going to repay good to others without any personal motive.

And in that day again, we shall find that many who are first are last and many who are last are first. So the time has come, we, the 24 elders, praise God, Revelation 11, 18, the time has come to reward all these people. And then one phrase in Revelation 11, 18, the last part we read, the time has also come to destroy those who corrupt the earth.

There are people who corrupt the earth. We read in Revelation 19, and verse 2, that the great harlot Babylon, Babylon we shall discover later on in our study of Revelation, is a picture of harlot Christianity. A

Christianity that claims to be engaged to Christ, but lives after its own lusts in the world.

It says, the great harlot, middle of verse 2, has corrupted the earth with her immorality. Spiritual immorality is what corrupts the earth. And it says here in Revelation 11, 18, that God is going to destroy those who corrupt the earth.

That's also mentioned in 1 Corinthians in chapter 3, verse 17, if anyone corrupts the temple of God, God will destroy him. And the temple of God, we are told in verse 16, is all of you. The church in Corinth is the temple of God.

And if a man brings corruption into God's house, the day will come when God will destroy him. We read that Ananias and Sapphira brought corruption into God's house, God destroyed them immediately. But that hasn't happened in these 2,000 years regularly, otherwise very few people would have been left.

And our churches probably would have been a little more pure. But God in his great wisdom has delayed that judgment, but that doesn't mean that the people who have sat in so many churches like Ananias and Sapphira, corrupting it with their hypocrisy, have got away with it. They certainly haven't, because that time is going to come.

It certainly will come when God who has taken note of every Ananias and Sapphira in these 2,000 years, is going to haul them all up one day, and he's going to destroy them. I believe that is going to be fulfilled exactly like it is written. That if anyone corrupts the temple of God, God will destroy him.

If that doesn't mean what it says, then we have to say that God's alive. And he's not talking to unbelievers, he's talking to believers in Corinth. He says, you are the temple of God, and don't you know this? That if anyone corrupts the temple of God, God will destroy him.

Maybe not immediately like Ananias and Sapphira, but at this time described in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 18. I want to show you another verse concerning this corruption in Ephesians 4.22. Ephesians 4.22. What is it that corrupts the world? We read in Ephesians 4, in verse 22, that the old man is corrupt in accordance with the lusts of deceit. Corruption in the world is due to lust.

As we read also in 2 Peter 1, and verse 4, the corruption that is in the world by lust. It is our lusts by which we corrupt the earth. And those who have lived after their lusts are mentioned here in Revelation 11, 18.

We can read Revelation 11, 18 like this. The time has come for God to destroy those who have lived after their lusts and corrupted the earth. In other words, this earth which was meant to be a pure, holy place for the sons and daughters of God, have been corrupted by people who lived after their lusts.

And the time has come for them to be destroyed. Revelation 11, 19. And the temple of God, which is in heaven, was opened.

That is the sanctuary of God. It's symbolic language. We read in Revelation 21, verse 22, that the city doesn't need any temple, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

So this is symbolic language. Revelation 11, 19. The temple of God in heaven is opened.

That is the very presence of God with His throne. And the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple. The ark of the covenant was the symbol of God's faithfulness in the nation of Israel.

That was the most sacred thing to the nation of Israel. That was kept in the most holy place of the tabernacle and the temple, and people could not go in to look at it. It was in God's presence, and it symbolized God's faithfulness to His covenant.

The Bible teaches that God is a covenant-keeping God, and this ark of His covenant symbolizes His faithfulness to the covenant that He has made with us. And there were flashes of lightning, and sounds and peals of thunder, and an earthquake, and a great hailstorm. These are just symbols of God's power.

Now we come to Revelation chapter 12. In Revelation chapter 12 we read, and a great sign appeared in heaven. A woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

Now, there are many people who have interpreted this in many different ways. We read that this woman gave birth to a child, and the child was caught up to God, and so they say the child was Christ. And therefore the Roman Catholics would say the woman was obviously Mary, but there are many things here which indicate it couldn't be Mary at all.

And then there are those who would say it's a church, and there are those who would say it's Israel. Now, I just want to give you a little helpful advice at this point. Whenever someone gives you an interpretation of any passage of scripture, and he cannot show you another passage of scripture which is the reason why he gives that interpretation, you must always put a question mark on his interpretation.

It may be right, but you have to allow for the possibility that it may be wrong. But the best way to interpret scripture is by comparing scripture with scripture. I find that the best way, because then it's not a question of what we think.

So, when we look through the whole Bible, as far as I can see, there's only one place where we read of a community of people described by this figure. Sun, and the moon, and the twelve stars. That's not Mary, that's not the church.

We read in Genesis 37, and verse 9. You know the story of Joseph, who was the eleventh of Jacob, that is, Israel's twelve sons. Israel had twelve sons who became the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. Now, Joseph was the eleventh of these twelve sons, and he was blessed by the Lord.

And it says here he had a dream. And in this dream, he said, Joseph had a dream, verse 5. And one of the dreams he had, verse 9, he still had another dream. And he told his brothers about this dream, Genesis 37, 9. Lo, I had still another dream, and here it is.

The sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me, the twelfth star. And his father understood what that meant. He said he related to his father and his brothers, and his father rebuked him and said, what is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother, that is, the sun and the moon, and your eleven brothers, actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground? And you know that later on in Egypt, that actually happens.

So, we see that the sun and the moon and the twelve stars are a picture of Jacob and the tribes of Israel. So, we turn to Revelation 12, 1, and we understand that that woman is symbolic of the nation of Israel. Now, this is one thing that I mentioned earlier, too, and I want to repeat it here, that everything that we find in the Bible in terms of prophecy in relation to Israel can be applied physically, literally to Israel and spiritually to the church.

It says here in verse 2, she was with child, the nation of Israel, and she cried out, being in labor and in pain, to give birth. Now, what's this? Let's turn to an Old Testament passage again, in Micah, chapter 5, verses 2 to 4. But as for you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, from you one will go forth to me to be ruler in Israel. This is speaking about Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.

You remember, when the wise men came to Herod, the priests pointed out this verse and said, Jesus has to be born, the Messiah has to be born in Bethlehem. Therefore, verse 3, He will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren, that is, the Gentiles who will be converted, will return to the sons of Israel, and He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord.

And so we find here that there is someone who is in labor, verse 3, who is going to bring forth a child, and we find the mention of Bethlehem in Micah, chapter 5, verse 2. This is the nation of Israel bringing forth Jesus Christ, Jesus the Messiah. And we are told in Romans, chapter 9, and verse 4 and 5, that one of the glory, one part of the glory that Israel had is that from them has come Christ, verse 5, according to the flesh. And so we find here in Revelation 12, this is a picture of the nation of Israel giving birth to Jesus Christ.

And we find here further in verse 3, Revelation 12, verse 3, and another sign appeared in heaven, and behold a great red dragon. Now, we don't have to interpret this. We are told in verse 9 that this dragon is Satan himself.

That's very clearly explained in verse 9. So this dragon is Satan, having seven heads and ten horns. We'll come to that when we study chapter 13, but just in passing, let me say that the seven heads and the ten horns are both symbolic of world government. Now, we'll come to that in chapter 13.

That's why I don't want to take time on that now, but it's significant that Satan has got these seven heads and ten horns, which means that Satan is in control of the governments of the world, which is something which is taught in other portions of scripture too. You read in Daniel, chapter 10, for example, of an evil spirit who was in control of the nation of Persia, and you read in Ephesians 6.12 that we wrestle with the world rulers, not only the evil principalities, but the world rulers in the heavenlies. The world rulers are not in the capital cities of the world.

They are only puppets being pulled by strings by some evil spirits up there. That's why the church is told to pray for those in authority, so that we can bind those evil spirits who are pulling the strings of these puppets, and that's something we ought to bear in mind. The church has got authority to pray for those who are government leaders, because these government leaders are puppets controlled by evil spirits in the heavenlies.

The dragon has got seven heads and ten horns, on his head were seven diadems. We find he is called a red dragon. Red is the picture of murder, blood, and Jesus said in John 8.44 that the devil was a murderer from the beginning.

The thief, Jesus said, does not come but to steal and to kill and to destroy. That's why he's a red dragon, and in passing let me say that when God created him, he wasn't like this. He was the most beautiful of all of God's creation.

We read about him in Ezekiel 28 as the anointed sheriff who ruled over the garden of God, but when pride came into his heart and rebellion against authority came into his heart, this beautiful sheriff became a horrible dragon. What's the lesson from that for us? You may be like an angel today, but let a little pride come into your heart and you'll be like a dragon in no time. Let a little of the spirit of rebellion against authority, whether that authority is your parents, or that authority is someone in your office, or that authority is someone in the church.

Let a little bit of that spirit of rebellion come into your heart, and beautiful and clever as you may be, you'll become like this dragon in a matter of time. Satan is always seeking to make people like himself, just like the Holy Spirit's always seeking to make people like Jesus, and the way Satan succeeds in making people like himself is by infecting them with pride and rebellion. Remember that.

Steer clear of any type of pride, particularly spiritual pride and rebellion. And we read here in verse 4, and his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. This seems to indicate, though we can't be dogmatic here, that perhaps one-third of the angelic host joined Satan in his rebellion.

Because there is a passage in the Old Testament, in the book of Job and chapter 38, Job and chapter 38, where we are told that when God laid the foundation of the earth, verse 7, the morning stars sang together. That's referring to the angels, and the sons of God again referring to the angelic beings shouted for joy. Job 38, verse 7. And so we see the stars are a picture of angels.

We saw that earlier in Revelation 9, verse 1-2, that the star is used as a symbol of an angel. So when it says in Revelation 12-4 one-third of the stars of heaven were thrown with him down to the earth, it seems to indicate that with his tail of deception, if you want a reference for that, Isaiah 9-15, it says the prophet who deceives others is the tail. Deception is the tail of the devil.

Isaiah 9-15, with that tail he pulled down one-third of the angelic hosts and gathered them in his rebellion against God Almighty. And this dragon, we read in verse 4, stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. Now this is something that has happened right through the history of Israel.

You know it began, for example, in Exodus 1-16, where Pharaoh gave an order to the midwives who were delivering the babies of the Israeli people, that if there is a son, just wait. As soon as the woman delivers, if it's a son, kill it. But that's not all.

Through the years, Satan has been against the Jewish people, this woman, and he has mainly been against the Jewish people because the Messiah was to come through the Jewish people. And in the Old Testament, we read in the book of Esther, of another Satan-inspired man called Haman, who tried to destroy the entire Jewish people. Haman was a sort of type of Hitler, he was the Hitler of the Old Testament, who tried to kill all the Jewish people, but he didn't succeed.

And we read when Jesus was born, we read that Satan instigated Herod to send his soldiers to Bethlehem to kill all the male children under the age of two. So there are many fulfillments to this picture here. This dragon waiting to devour the child, he's not really interested in the other Jews, he was interested in the child that was going to be born, the Messiah.

How did he know he was going to be born? Because the promise was given in the Garden of Eden. His seed, the seed of the woman, will bruise the head of the serpent. That's why he wanted to finish off the

child.

That's why he wanted to finish off Jesus. But he didn't succeed, we know, through the ages. And neither has he succeeded through Hitler, Haman, or Herod, or any one of them, or Pharaoh.

And it says here, she gave birth to a son, a male. That is Israel bringing forth Christ. And we know this is referring to Jesus Christ, because it says that He is to rule this son, is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron.

And that we read in Revelation 19, 15. Revelation 19, 15, we read about Jesus Christ. That He, in the middle of that verse, He will rule the nations with a rod of iron.

And His name, verse 13, is the Word of God. Verse 16, He's the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. So we see that the one who rules all nations with a rod of iron, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the one referred to here.

And notice, in verse 5 of Revelation 12, Jesus is called a son and a child. She gave birth to a son, and in the last part of the verse, her child was brought up to God. That reminds us of Isaiah 9, verse 6. Isaiah 9, verse 6, where it says, A child will be born to us, and a son will be given to us.

His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace, referring to Jesus Christ again. So we see here that this child is to rule all nations. And I just want to point out to you in verse 5, that if you've got a margin in your Bible, the word rule is also called here shepherd.

He's not going to rule them in the way that earthly rulers rule today. He's going to shepherd the nation. And true rulership, in God's eyes, is by the spirit of the shepherd who leads his sheep.

So Jesus Christ is going to shepherd the nation. Today, He shepherds the church. And any true God-appointed leader can be identified by this mark, that he will be a shepherd, not a tyrant, not a boss, but a shepherd.

If you find a Christian leader who is more like a boss, you can be perfectly sure he's got the spirit of the Gentiles, not the spirit of Christ. The spirit of Christ is one of a shepherd. His leadership is always that of a shepherd who goes ahead and leads by example, not with a whip from the back.

We find here the child is caught up to God's throne. Now, this is another indication that this child is Jesus Christ, because we read in Revelation 3.21, Jesus says, if anyone overcomes, he can sit with me on, not on the throne of God, but on my throne, the throne of Jesus Christ, even as I overcame and I have sat down with my father on his throne. So who is the one who is sitting with the father on his throne? That's not us, that's Jesus Christ.

And so we find in Revelation 12.5, the child was caught up to God, the father, and to his throne. That again refers to Christ. Now, as I said, all this is a very beautiful picture of Israel bringing forth Christ, Satan trying to devour Christ, but Christ being caught up, his whole life is skipped over there, but finally ascended up in the cloud to sit with the father on his throne.

But what is literally true of Israel is also spiritually true of the church. And I just want to point out a few things here in relation to the church, in its application to us spiritually. There's a verse in Galatians 4 and verse 26, Galatians 4.26, which says, the Jerusalem above is free and she is our mother.

Symbolically, we could look at this woman also as a picture of the church to get some spiritual truth out of it for ourselves. What is the truth then? The truth is that through the travail of this woman comes forth a child. And that is the picture of the overcomer that comes forth through the travail of the church.

Galatians 4.19, my children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you. God is looking for those who will have a spirit of travail to bring forth Christ in others. That is part of the spiritual application of this truth.

And Jesus said also in John 16 and verse 21, when a woman is in travail, she has sorrow because her hour has come. But when she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more for joy that a child has been born into the world. Therefore, you also now have sorrow.

What type of sorrow? Verse 21, the sorrow of a spiritual travail. Do we have it? I think perhaps one percent of believers have this. A travail that Christ will be formed in people in the church.

That Christ will be formed, not just a question of having our sins forgiven and going to heaven when we die. The travail that Paul had. He says, but I'll see you again and your heart will rejoice.

And this is what we see here of those who have overcome being caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Well, let's turn back to Revelation and chapter 12. That's just by the way, but as I said earlier, it literally applies to the nation of Israel.

Now we come to Revelation 12 and verse 6. The woman, which is again Israel, fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God. Now this is referring to the time when the Antichrist is going to rule on the earth after he has broken his covenant with the Jews. You remember in our last study, we saw how the time is going to come when the Antichrist will present himself to the Jews as their Messiah and the Jews will be deceived and they will make a covenant.

He'll make a covenant with them for seven years, not the God fearing ones, but with the nation of Israel, which is basically ungodly. And in the middle of that seven year period, he's going to break that covenant and he's going to trample the Jews underfoot and Jerusalem. And at that time is going to be a time of tremendous persecution for the nation of Israel.

And at that time, the woman is going to be protected by God. We read here and nourished by God in the wilderness for a period of 1,260 days. That is this three and a half year period that we considered last time.

I want to show you an Old Testament reference about this in Jeremiah chapter 30, where we find again a picture of travail. Jeremiah chapter 30. First of all, it says in verse three, I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the Lord.

I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their forefathers. And then that says the Lord, verse five, I've heard a sound of terror. Verse six, ask now and see if a male can give birth.

Why do I see every man with his hand on his loins as a woman in childbirth? Notice the same picture again. Alas, for that day is great. There is none like it.

This is the period of the great tribulation. It is called here the time of Jacob's distress. That is the time of distress for the people of Israel.

But he will be protected from it. That is the protection that we read of in Revelation 12, 6, where the woman is going to be protected in the wilderness for this period of three and a half years. And we read further in verse seven, there was war in heaven.

Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war. Michael is the archangel.

And we read of Michael in Daniel chapter 10, verse 21, the last part. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael, your prince. There we find, we don't have time to go into Daniel, but some time ago we studied that chapter where we find when the angel was coming to answer Daniel's prayer, he was resisted by the evil spirit of Persia.

And it says Michael, who is called here the prince of Israel. There are many evil spirits appointed over the different nations by the devil. And God has appointed Michael the archangel over Israel.

That's why he's called here Michael, your prince. And Daniel chapter 12, verse one, at that time, Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, that is over the Israelites, will arise. He will arise.

That's what we saw in Revelation 12. Michael the archangel is going to stand up against this dragon who was persecuting Israel. There will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time.

That is the period of great tribulation. And at that time, your people, those who are sealed by God, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. And verse seven, I heard the man dressed in the linen who was above the waters of the river as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever that it would be for how long? For one time, that is one year, two times, plus two years, plus half a time, that's half a year.

Total, three and a half years. And as soon as they finish shattering the power of the Israelites, all these events will be completed. So there we see in the book of Daniel too, there's going to be a three and a half year period at the end of the age when there's going to be this fight between Michael and the dragon.

And there will be this time of intense persecution. And we read in Revelation 12, back to Revelation 12, and the dragon and his angels fought. And verse eight, they were not strong enough.

And there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down. Now we know that this is still in the future.

This is the final three and a half year period before Jesus establishes his kingdom on earth. That is the time when Satan is going to be thrown down to the earth. So where is Satan today then? He's in the heavenlies.

Not in hell. Hell is in the heart of the earth. He's not there.

By popular misunderstanding, people think Satan is in hell. Those who go to hell will be surprised to find Satan isn't there yet. He's going to be cast into the lake of fire, but he's not there now.

He's in the heavenlies. That's why it says we wrestle with the evil forces of darkness in the heavenlies, Ephesians 6.12. Now the Bible speaks of three heavens. The first heaven is this visible heaven, which we

can see as we look into the sky.

The third heaven, which we read in 2nd Corinthians 12, is where the apostle Paul was caught up, is called paradise. Between the first heaven and the third heaven is an intermediate space, which we cannot see, which is called the second heaven. This is why we find it difficult to pray sometimes, because we've got to penetrate the second heaven to get to the third one.

And the only way to penetrate it really is by the spirit of praise. There's one thing the devil can't stand. It is praise.

Praise to God. Praise to God. And that's the way we penetrate through the second heaven into the third.

That's why I tell people if you find it difficult to pray, stop praying and start praising God. Get connection with the third heaven and then start your prayer. That's just in passing.

So we read here that the dragon and his angels were cast out of heaven. And we read further in verse 9, and the great dragon was thrown down. You remember what Jesus said, I beheld Satan.

Luke chapter 10, verse 18, Jesus said, I beheld Satan fall from heaven like lightning. I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. And then what did he say? Luke 10, verse 18 and 19, he says, I have given you, my disciples, authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of Satan, and nothing shall injure you.

Jesus had already seen Satan fall when he fell initially, but that verse also refers to Satan's final fall down to the earth, and then his final fall into the bottomless pit, and then the last fall into the lake of fire. Satan's got a number of falls from the presence of God down to the second heaven, and then from there to the earth, from the earth to the bottomless pit, from the bottomless pit to the lake of fire. And Jesus puts that all together as Satan's falling like lightning.

He says, I've seen it. And I want to tell you something, brothers and sisters, you and I need to see it. When we see it, we won't be afraid of Satan anymore.

We'll know that he was defeated on the cross. The prince of the world has been judged. It's an absolute shame for a believer to be afraid of Satan.

No, no need to be. Let's ask God to open our eyes to see the fall of Satan. Like I said in our first study of this book, if there's one reason why the devil hates the book of Revelation, it's because it describes his final doom.

And sometimes the devil puts off the lights at a time like this when we are talking about things like this. The thing he doesn't like people to hear, that he's already defeated. He's already cast down.

And Jesus has triumphed. He's the victor. We are members of his body.

So we see here, Michael and his angels cast Satan out. There was a time long ago when Satan was above Michael. He was the leader.

But he lifted himself up and he was cast down. Finally, Michael is given the job of clearing the second heaven of Satan and his hosts. That's pretty much of a humiliation for this man who was once the boss and who had that spirit of a boss, who didn't understand the spirit of God.

And he's cast out. There was no longer a place found for them in heaven. God has allowed him to be there for some time, but he's going to be thrown out.

Verse 9, And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old, who is called the devil. Now I want to tell you something interesting about this word devil. The word devil is a Greek word called diabolos, from which we get the English word diabolical.

Diabolos and the Greek word diabolos just means slanderer or backbiter. And I'll tell you something. I'll show you two or three verses in the New Testament where the same word diabolos is used.

First of all, 1 Timothy 3 verse 11. 1 Timothy 3 verse 11, it says concerning the women, verse 11, women must likewise be dignified, not diabolos. They must not be devils.

It's the same word. Now, I'm not against women. Neither is the apostle Paul, neither is God.

He's just giving us a loving exhortation that women must not be little devils. That is slanderer, speaking evil about somebody behind their back. Of course, men shouldn't be slanderers either.

2 Timothy chapter 3, here it speaks about the men. 2 Timothy 3, the word of God is very balanced. Verse 2 and 3, it says the last days, difficult times will come for men will be lovers of self and, verse 3, unloving, irreconcilable and little devil.

Diabolos. You see it there? Titus chapter 2, Titus chapter 2, verse 3. Older women, oh these are the ones who should be full of wisdom with their gray hair, are to be reverent in their behavior and not diabolos, not little devil. Slanderer.

When old women become little devils, boy, that's really something. Now, I just mentioned that in passing, that the same word which is translated as devil throughout the New Testament has been translated in these three passages as slanderers. To slander is to engage in the activity of Satan, the devil.

It is to get his name. Like Christian is to get the name of Christ, slanderer is to get the name of the devil, whether man or woman, old woman or old man, whatever, it makes no difference. To slander people, to speak evil of them behind their back, that is to be a devil.

And so we read here, the devil and his other name is Satan, which means adversary, resistor of God, resistor of truth, resistor of God's people. And he's also called deceiver, the deceiver of the whole world. Here are three titles, slanderer, resistor, deceiver.

He's thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him. And that is for a period of three and a half years that Satan is going to be right here on this earth. He's not here yet.

If the world is a mess right now, you can imagine what it's going to be when he's down here on the earth with his angels and he's left that place. And it says that he's going to have great wrath at that time. Verse 10, I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, just by the way, in heaven, they are not afraid of raising their voice.

It's only here on earth that people whisper praises to God. Oh, Lord, I'd like to praise you. Things like that.

In heaven, they shout and they praise God with all of their voices. There are no shy people there. In a loud voice in heaven, that comes a number of times in the book of Revelation saying, now the salvation and the

power and the kingdom of God and the authority of his Christ have come.

For the accuser, this is the slanderer, accuser of our brethren has been thrown down. Do any of you or I, do any of us get that title sometimes? Accuser of the brethren. The next time you speak evil about a brother or sister, remember what you heard this evening.

The accuser of the brethren. Let it ring in your mind as you are slandering someone to someone else. The accuser of the brethren, the accuser of the brethren, the slanderer, the diablo, the devil is active now, has been thrown down who accuses them before our God day and night.

This teaches us that the devil is accusing us before God day and night. See that child of yours, see how he's behaving there. See that person there who calls himself your child, the way he's talking there now, accusing day and night.

You think the devil isn't watching your private life? Other believers may not be watching, but the devil is because he's got plenty of material. He wants plenty of material to accuse you and me before God. That's something we need to bear in mind.

Our calling is to glorify Christ and give no room for Satan to accuse us in any area. And it says here in verse 11 about the believers overcoming Satan, overcoming Satan. Now, in the Old Testament, you know, in the book of Job, how Satan accused Job to God saying, oh, Job serves God because you blessed him.

You stop blessing him and he'll stop serving you. Do you think Satan accuses people like that today? Yes, he tries to. Oh, that fellow there, he's serving God with the wrong motives.

Sometimes the devil, God has to say, well, that's right. In his case, that's right. But in that other person's case, it's not right.

You see, God is righteous. He doesn't try to cover up for us when we are serving him with wrong motives. That's why we have to judge ourselves and cleanse ourselves so that there's no room for Satan to accuse us to God.

And it says here they overcame him. These are the believers who overcome Satan. How do we overcome Satan? Three weapons.

One, the blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for our sins. Lord Jesus, you shed your blood and I have repented and confessed my sin. Therefore, it is cleansed.

There is no need for anyone to remain under the accusation of He accuses us to God, he accuses us to ourselves. The only way to overcome is to say, well, that particular sin you're accusing me of, Satan, I've already confessed and repented of. It's forgiven.

I'm cleansed. The blood of Jesus has cleansed me. Second, by the word of their testimony.

That means the confession of our mouth about the blood of the lamb. Confession, not public testimony in the meeting, but testimony to Satan. We have to speak the word to Satan.

I have been cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ. Speak that to Satan, otherwise we cannot overcome his accusation. And third, they did not love their life even to death.

That means they took up the cross and died to themselves. Those are the weapons. The blood of the lamb, our spoken word of testimony to Satan about the blood of the lamb.

And third, that I take up my cross because it is on the cross of Calvary that Jesus defeated Satan. And it is as I take my place as crucified with Christ and die to myself, take up my cross every day that I can overcome Satan too. People ask, why do you always preach about taking up the cross, taking up the cross? I'll tell you, because we want to overcome Satan.

That's why every day I want to take up the cross because I want to overcome Satan every day. That's why Jesus said take up the cross every day. The only way to overcome Satan every day.

The day you're unwilling to die to yourself, the day you want to stand up on your right and your reputation, that day Satan overcomes you. Right, verse 12, for this reason rejoice, O heaven, and you who dwell in them. Now in the New Testament, I find there are three places where it says heaven rejoices, at least three.

You know one, Luke 15 verse 7, there's joy in heaven over a sinner who repents. Second, Revelation 12, 11 and 12, there's joy in heaven when a believer overcomes Satan. Third, Revelation 19 verse 7, let us rejoice, they say in heaven, because of the marriage of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.

Notice these three stages. Stage one, when we repent of our sins, there's joy in heaven. Stage two, there's joy in heaven when I overcome Satan in my personal life.

And stage three, when I have made myself ready as the bride for the marriage of the Lamb. And every one of us is to become a cause for joy in heaven if we go through these three stages, repentance, overcoming, and being ready to be the bride of Christ. Now we see here, they overcame him.

I just want you to notice this one thing, it is because Jesus has overcome Satan that now the Lord gives us the privilege of executing that victory which he has already won. Why does it say in Romans 16 20, the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. There's a sense in which he's already been crushed on the cross, but now as believers on this earth, we have the privilege.

He tried to devour Christ when he was born, verse 4, he didn't succeed. In heaven he fought with Michael and the angels, he got thrown out. He fights with us, are we going to be defeated? No, shame on us if we don't see our calling, that that which Jesus has accomplished on the cross, we are to now execute that the God of peace will through us be able to crush Satan in our daily life, and finally completely.

And then we read about the time when the devil comes on the earth, verse 12, woe to the earth and the sea because the devil has come down to you having great wrath knowing he has only a short time. The devil is a student of prophecy, he knows that he's got only three and a half years once he comes down, and it's going to be a terrible time. And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted Israel who gave birth to Jesus Christ.

And that's going to be a terrific time of persecution, but God is going to protect his people, his earthly people. Verse 14, the two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman. I don't know whether this refers to some type of airlift or something by which they can escape in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place.

It seems to indicate there's going to be some place where the Lord is going to protect his people from the persecution, and where she was nourished for one year plus two years plus half a year, that is three and a half years from the presence of the serpent, so that there's going to be protection for the Jews at that time. And the serpent poured out water like a river out of his mouth. This seems to be some type of persecution through the nations of the earth after Israel, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.

But the earth helped the woman, which seems to indicate that there will be some people who will help the Jews, like in the second world war time. And the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. There is going to be human help for the Jews at that time too.

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, with Israel, couldn't do much to her, and went off to make war with whom? With the rest of her offspring, those who were born through the twelve apostles, who were all Jews, that is those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ, which seems to indicate that at that time there will be Christians on the earth as well, who hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ. And they're going to overcome him. And it's going to be a tremendous testimony to God.

Brothers and sisters, God's preparing a people for that day, when we shall really bring glory and honor to him, being prepared in these days to overcome Satan completely in that day, so that he can be crushed under our feet. Jeremiah 12 5 says, today the Lord teaches us to run with men, so that one day we can run with horses. Today he trains us in the time of peace, so that one day when the flood of Jordan comes, we shall stand.

And it's going to be a tremendous glory to God in that day, when there's a company of people on earth who will stand as overcomers, overcoming, because they do not love their life even unto death. And today is the day when God is preparing that people. We can't be prepared all of a sudden, but if we take every opportunity that comes our way today to die and go down, then when the flood comes, we shall stand up and be a testimony for our Lord.

Amen.

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